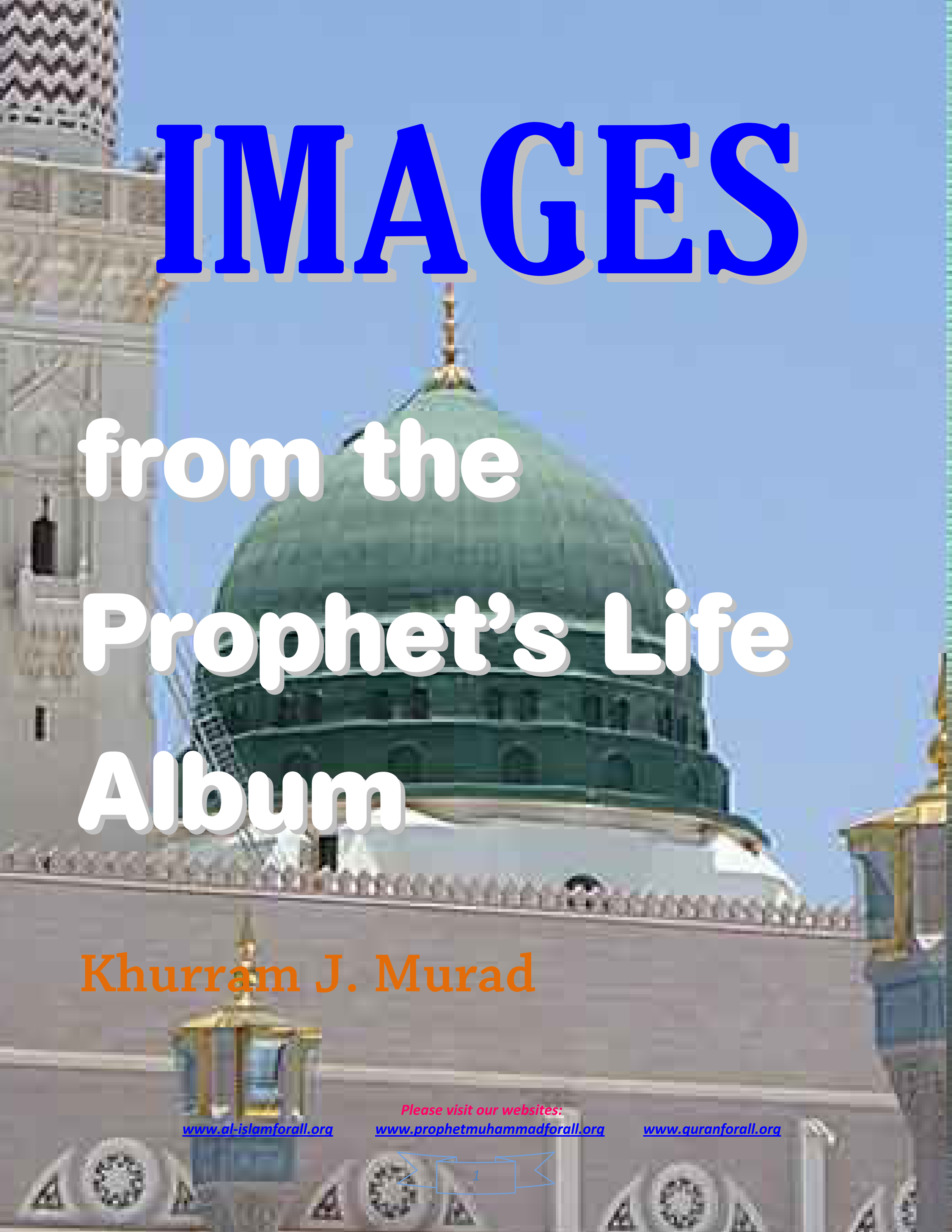


IMAGES from the Prophet's Life Album

Khurram J. Murad

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بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

CONTENTS

In the name of Allah, the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful

"Images from the Prophet's Life Album" *is one of the most popular writings of Khurram Murad. In this small yet great book he adopts a unique style of character sketching. Keeping the reader engaged in his beautiful description of the most important aspects of the Holy Prophet Muhammad's life (may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him), Khurram Murad gracefully discharges his own duty of calling us to submit our lives to the Will of Allah and stand witness to the Truth.*

In a very moving manner, the author presents the fascinating images formed through a lifetime study of the Seerah (Prophet's blessed biography). May Allah bless his soul and give him a place in Jannah near the Prophet, the object of his love and adoration.

I thank my Most Merciful Lord that He gave me the opportunity to do some good during my days of illness. I am thankful to Prof. Muslim Sajjad who assigned me the pleasant task of rendering this masterpiece in English.

Khurram Murad always wanted to see the 'da'wah' literature produced in the best possible get-up, pleasing to the eye and yet inexpensive. He always thought that it should be published widely and made easily available.

"Manshurat" is a realization of his dreams. It tries to present, among other material, Khurram Murad's books in the manner he liked.

2O Jamadi -ul- Awal 1423 H. ***Tayyeb Gulzar Khan***

31 July, 2OO2 A.D. *Lahore (Pakistan)*

Preface

Only a few days after my first heart surgery in January 1982, I was asked to speak at the Annual Conference of the UK Islamic Mission to be held in Glasgow in the month of August. I was convinced that the theme of this speech would only be the Da'wah (the Call to Islam). Yet, my mind kept working on stylistics.

In the lonely hours of the night before the conference there flashed across my mind the 'album' in which i had been collecting the gracious and comely images formed over years from my study and deliberation of the life history of great personalities. Most of these images were drawn from the excellent life example (Uswa -e-Hasana) of Prophet Muhammad (may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him). His whole life and personality was but an embodiment of 'da'wah'.

The outcome next day was a short half-an-hour speech. It was the closing speech of the conference. Mufti Maqbool Ahmad, a revered scholar of Islam who is not from the rank and file of the Mission, expressed his approval in the words of the Qur'an;



Whose seal is Musk —— so after that let the strivers strive (Al Mutaffifin 83:26)

In 1983 when I spoke at the annual convention of Islami Jamiat-e-Talaba, I opened my album further under the title 'Uswa-e-Hasana'. This speech was reproduced by the monthly 'Hamqadam', Lahore. Later, the women's wing of Jamaat-e-Islami Pakistan published and circulated it on a large scale.

I was not really happy with the content, arrangement and style of the presentation and had always wished to revise it. During my short visit to Karachi in 1986 our dear brother Shahid Hashmi asked for an urgent review so that the Jamiat could publish it. On my return from Karachi when I sat to revise it, the result, as it always happens, was something altogether new.

I hope that now this booklet will be more helpful to the reader. I also hope it will be accepted in Allah's Presence and prove instrumental in my salvation.

In my opinion the resuscitation of the Muslim nation and the triumph of the Islamic Movement depend upon presenting the da'wah in the manner reflected in these images from the Prophet's life album.

A profound commitment to the mission, a deep sense of accountability, a selfless affection for humanity, simple living, an invitation to Allah's service, a message of equality and justice —— these are the ingredients wherein lie hidden all that we so ardently seek.

If this booklet succeeds in inspiring hearts, young and old, and creates a desire for such values in the youth, women, children, and the elderly, I should consider myself to be very fortunate.

4 Ramadan, 14O6 H.
31 May. 1986 A. D.

Khurram J. Murad
Leicester (England)





I have a lovely album. To tell you the truth, whenever I happen to look at a picture of extraordinary beauty, I yearn to keep it with me forever. For this reason I secure it in my album. I have been collecting such things of beauty for a long time. Countless images that I have selected now decorate this album of mine.

Today I wish to open this very special album and show you some of its treasures - a feast for the eye. May be these wonderful images fascinate you and your heart is drawn and enslaved to their beauty. May be you too feel like possessing them, keeping them in the recesses of your heart. They would be available all the time to please the eye and warm the heart. From then on they might affect your whole being. And who knows beholding and adoring them, you might begin, one day, to reshape your own life on the pattern of those lives that these pictures so truly represent.

If you develop an attachment to these images, they are yours for ever; embrace them, keep them in your heart, paste them in your album. By giving them away, I will not be deprived of them; nor shall they desert my album.

These pictures need no mechanical shooting. All you need is the lens of your eyes, the film of your mind and the album of your heart. Such is the nature of these images.

Everything Unique



This album of mine is unique, very different from the ordinary. It does not have embellished pages nor a decorative binding. It is neither static nor lifeless. It is lively, vibrant and constantly moving. It knows no inertia; it has never tasted the cold hands of death. It draws its life from the warmth of feelings, its color from the flight of imagination, its rhythm from the beatings of the human heart.

One might wonder what album could be so unique.

My album is my heart, the nucleus of my being, the center of my self. The heart supplies whatever the veins and the muscles receive, be it love or hate, be it grit or lack of it. It has countless pages; it is immortal in nature.

Exceptional is the beauty which these images have captured, and exceptional are the pictures themselves Nevertheless, the universe abounds in beauty and magnificence. The Maker, the All Merciful, the All Beneficent Allah himself is an embodiment of beauty and its Shaper. Look at the colorful rocks, high and low, see the budding, blooming flowers, the decorated panorama of the earth, twinkling of the stars, flight of birds, and animals walking on the face of this earth. You will find beauty blended in everything. It is all pervasive. The Creator has been very gracious; wherever you look, you witness the bounty of your Lord.

But let me tell you what fascinates me the most, what engages the eye, goes deep down into the heart and stays there for ever: a good human being. What I adore is good moral character How wonderful, how very charming is the beauty of character!

Who could excel the object of my love in personal charm and attraction? Whose likeness could ever be more fascinating than his? The sky has never canopied over, and the earth spread itself before a better, more gracious and unforgettable character.

He ;'s the very Paragon of Perfection,

The light of his countenance dispels darkness;

His very elements are beautiful;

Invoke blessings on him and his descendants.

Let us now move from the uniqueness of this beauty to the singularity of these images. The pictures that I am going to show you date back to the days when there used to be no cameras. Figures were sketched by hand on stone or paper. Now we do have cameras and video cameras. Even if these mechanical devices had been there, the images they had stored would not have influenced my heart, I could never take to liking camera-photos, static and lifeless as they are. The moving and talking figures of motion pictures seem to me more like puppets, without the warmth of life and emotions.

The pictures in my album are made of words. Some of them are my own compositions, results of my study and experience. But the more vivid ones that I am going to show you were drawn in words by the companions of the Countenance of Beauty, the

Prophet (may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him). A verbal picture has qualities of its own: it appears before the eyes, goes down into the heart, stirs the feelings, makes the heart beat louder, brings warmth to blood and contentment to the heart.

In Lc.ve's Eye and Ecstasy

The Beloved is both First and Last Eternally

These pictures are very dear to me; I like them immensely.

I wish you could also share my love for them. May you excel me in fondness and constancy for them. Love alone can cross the limits of time and space and bring one closer to the object of one's adoration. The Mercy for Mankind, peace be upon him, has given the same good news:

One of the Prophet's companions Abdultan Bin Masud (may Allah be pleased with him) tells us about a person who came to the Prophet (may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him) with a question that disturbed him. We feel the same way but no longer have the opportunity to ask a question of the kind. So, in a way, on behalf of all of us, the man said:" O Messenger of Allah, peace be upon you, what do you say of those who love (some) people but fail to meet them?"

Neither could they get an audience with, nor enjoy the company of the people they adored; there remained the distance of time and space and the difference in the words and deeds of the lovers and the beloved.

The Prophet (may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him) replied:

"Man is with him whom he loves" (Bukhari, Muslim).

This is true about the relationships of this world. You may fall in love and see for yourselves how the differences of time and space vanish. The same is true of the other and ever-lasting world. Anas (may Allah be pleased with him) narrates that a man asked the Prophet:

"When will the Doom be?"

The Prophet said: "Why? Have you made any preparations for it?"

The man said: "None, except that 1 love Allah and His Apostle,"

The Prophet said, "You will be with those whom you love".

Could there be a word more delightful than this? Even the people of the time when the Prophet (may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him) was present amongst them felt so joyous that nothing had made them happier since their conversion to Islam. Anas testifies it.

We, who are quite hopeless and dejected weaklings, who have badly failed to prepare for the hereafter, can find comfort and delight in the words of the Prophet. If we love him, we can ensure a place in the hereafter in the company of both Allah and His Messenger, and the circle of those who love them.

The Prophet (may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him) is no more amongst us. What we have is the true and vivid depiction of his vigorous life. His excellent life example, his 'uswa-tun-hasana', has been preserved with care. If we take a fancy to the

charming traits of his character, fix our eyes on them, keep them in our heart and try to emulate them, there is no reason why we should not deserve the glad tidings. Although we cannot sit at his feet today, we can hear the echo of his footsteps. We shall have the pleasure of seeing him in the hereafter and sitting in his blessed company, 'Insha Allah'.

Moreover, these pictures not only generate ripples of joy but also pangs of sorrow. Pains shoot up from my heart. You too can feel their impact. What causes them? When I compare my own life with these images, I find obvious differences, contradictions indeed, between the two. This comparison is always depressing. I wonder if I have stopped loving these pictures and, in my indifference, chosen wrong ways to tread. I am afraid lest I should be deprived of closeness to the person 1 claim to adore and following whom is my chief desire.

I want to give you this grief of mine. You better take it away along with the pictures. You might complain that sorrow should not be a part of the package. Gifts are supposed to bring with them only bliss and joy. But I assure you if you develop a taste for the type of grief that I offer, you will be immunized once and for all against all kinds of fear, sorrow, anxiety and grief over unfulfilled desires. The glad tidings of 'On them shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve' will come true in your case too. And you will deserve the high place that ensures the blessed company of our beloved Prophet (may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him).

Look at these pictures so as to enjoy their grace and beauty, develop an immense liking for them, and turn them into a criterion for yourselves. These images should be collectively used as a mirror to show you your own reflection, the days and nights of your life, so that you could see how far your own picture resembles them.

IMAGE:

Calling to Allah



How does a picture take its shape? Countless tiny dots gather in a certain order to form a clear picture. A great number of pictures are moved at high speed in a special sequence to give the impact of a moving picture. I placed all of the available images from the Prophet's life album in an order bequeathed by his worthy companions. I watched each image, one after the other, from end to end. The most distinctive, vibrant and vivid pattern was that of a Caller, calling people to their Lord. He was an apostle sent from Allah with a message. To propagate this message gave meaning to his existence, and was the essence of his life. It became evident to me that his life, from the first Divine revelation in the Cave of Hira, where the first beams of enlightenment lit his heart, to the moment of his death, his rendezvous with the Excellent Companion (Allah), was a dynamic picture of da'wah and apostleship. His concern for the mission, the da'wah, occupied his mind, engaged the heart, directed the efforts, and guided the social relationships. Life moved round the one and only objective: to call people to their Lord.

Owing to a general deterioration of standards the term "uswa-e-hasana" has come to initiate questions like: What kind of clothes did the Prophet wear? What were his table manners? How did he move around and how did he sit? Only rarely do we question: What morals did he hold dear and what was his social behavior? But what the expression 'uswa-tun-hasana' does not bring to mind are those images from his life album that depict his struggles in the streets of Makkah, calling the Makkahns from the mount of Safa, touring public attractions like the fair of Akkaz, suffering persecution in the valley of Ta'if, and facing war on the battlefields of Badr, Uhad, Hunain, and Hudabia.

The pictures depicting the Prophet's mannerisms are surely a part of his "uswa" (life pattern); each of these pictures is quite attractive and important for us. But the Qur'an says:

لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِيْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ(الا حزاب ٣٣:٢١)

In the Apostle of Allah ye have indeed a beautiful pattern (of conduct) (Al-Ahzab 33:21).

Just try to concentrate on the meanings of the words, "the Apostle of Allah' and everything will be clear to you. You will realize that all the pictures in the Prophet's life album are important, yet the most significant image of his life is the one that projects him as an apostle or Messenger. This image, full of life and movement, comprises a series of pictures that show him discharging his duties as a Messenger of Allah: calling people to the way of Islam, warning them, invoking blessings, breaking good news, reading out the verses of the Qur'an, and purifying the hearts.

Every moment of his life reflects these images. Certainly, we should wear, eat, drink, sleep, wake, and move around in the way he liked and in morals we should follow his example. If we truly love him, we must p!an our lives on the pattern of his life as a messenger of Allah.

I hope it will be easy for you now to appreciate why I have chosen these pictures for you.

Let me show you the album.



THE FIRST IMAGE

Tearful Eyes



The first picture has been preserved for us by Abdullah Bin Masud (may Allah be pleased with him). He narrates:

"One day I was present before the Prophet (may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him) who was sitting in his pulpit. Addressing me the Prophet said: 'Abdullah, (come and) recite (from) the Qur'an to me.'

In amazement and respect I asked: "Shall I recite (it) to you on whom it has been revealed?"

He said, 'I like to hear it from others.'

So I started to recite Surah An-Nisa (The Women). When I reached the verse:

فَكَيْفَ إِذَا جِئْنَا مِن كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ بِشَهِيدٍ وَجِئْنَا بِكَ عَلَى هَـؤُلاء شَهِيداً(النساء ٤ :٤١)

'How (will it be) then when We bring from each nation a witness, and We bring you (O Muhammad) as a witness against these people?'(An-Nisa 4:41).

There came from him a cry. 'Stop Abdullah, recite no more!' I raised my head to look at him. Both of his eyes were overflowing with tears"(Bukhan, Muslim).

Look at this picture with attention. What could be that great responsibility the appreciation of which melted the heart and brought tears to the eyes? it is the obligation to stand witness to the Truth before the slaves of Allah. It is the responsibility of the Da'wah. The intensity is because of the deep sense of accountability. One day Allah will question how far the duty has been performed. What would be the reply? Look at the love he has for his Lord! Admire his fear of confronting his Master. What a strange and appealing combination of love and fear! Mark his compassion and mercy for mankind. Such was his faith in the Divine Word that only a few verses brought all the love, fear and kindness to his eyes in the form of tears. How can one help not loving such a picture?

Now, have a look at yourself in the light of this picture. You know that as Muslims you have been raised as an Ummah to stand witness to the Truth in front of your nation and the rest of the world. This is the objective of your life. For this cause you have organized yourselves. Day and night you repeat the terms like "the implementation of Shariah', 'Islamic Order", 'the establishment of the Deen', the rule of Allah', 'witness to the Truth', Let us be honest and speak the truth. How many times have we cried, during the day or at night, thinking of the hour when Allah will make us stand before Him to account for as a witness to the people living around us? What will then our position be?

You know it very well that you too are obliged to stand witness to the Truth before the world in the way the Prophet stood in his days. You will have to stand in front of Allah, as the Apostle will. You will also be asked if you had stood witness to the Truth in front of your household, school and college mates, your colleagues at the work-place, the inhabitants of your town and country who treaded the paths of evil and were led astray. Were you a true or a false witness? Were you mindful or negligent of your duty? Were you thoughtful of all human beings or just worried about your own comforts and your own salvation?

Did such thoughts ever move you to tears? If not, it means this image of the Prophet (may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him) has not been affixed in your heart. Your heart is still devoid of that tenderness of love for your Lord and His creatures without which your life cannot attain any beauty and grace. You may deliver speeches, read books, shout slogans, hold grand meetings, and what not; nothing will be fruitful without a deep passion for and dedication to the Cause.

Viewing this picture should move you to tremble. You should shiver, and shed tears whenever you recall that you will be accountable for every indifference shown to the Lord by your people who neither follow the right path nor obey Him. You might be held responsible for the lapses of others around you.

THE SECOND IMAGE

The Tender, Tormented Heart



Let us take a look at the second picture. It was not drawn by any mortal but by Him Who is "The Artist"; the entire universe speaks of the excellence and perfection of His art.

لَعَلَّكَ بَاخِعٌ نَّفْسَكَ أَلَّا يَكُونُوا مُؤْمِنِينَ(الشورى ٢٦:٣)

It may be that thou tormentest thyself (O Muhammad) because they believe not (Ash-Shura 26:3).

The statement is brief but the picture is complete and comprehensive. Only a few words reflect a myriad of colors; there are several of its features that stir the heart.

One aspect is the Prophet's faith in his own truthfulness, a faith that one has in the existence of the sun on a bright sunny morning. Whatever is beyond our sight and perception is quite evident on the Prophet.

His faith is confronted by repeated denials and rejections. What would be the mental condition of the person who, pointing to the shining sun, declared that it was day time and people refused to accept it? They brand him as a liar, and an impostor. Could you imagine how stifling their attitude to him would be? The people are not satisfied with only refuting his claims; they laugh at him, turn against him, and oppress him. Think of what his heart goes through and how correctly the Artist paints his picture by using the expression "tormentest thyself".

There is another feature far more fascinating. To grieve over rejections is but natural. Every human being suffers them. But there is one thing very hard to visualize. The Artist brings it before our eyes. Despite rejections, accusations and enmity, there are no signs of anger or ill will on the part of the Prophet. He has only one desire, one concern, one passion: to bring his people to the way of Allah, rescue them from the wrath of Allah and the fire of hell. His greatest wish is that they be sent to heaven and rewarded with a fair and just reward in this world and the hereafter.

It is one of the most attractive combinations of devotion, concern and grief from which emerge the characteristics of the picture of one who torments himself. He is emaciating, losing control over himself and virtually dying of this grief.

He is not aggrieved because people are not paying him the attention he seeks. He is not suffering because people are rejecting the invitation to the Truth. He is not dying to win their confidence. The pain and the grief is because people are rushing towards the fire like moths falling in it, and are, above all, happy and contented to die this way.

Ah! what boldness (they show) for. the Fire! (Al-Baqara 2:175).

On one hand he is in love with his Lord and fellow creatures. He is by nature a compassionate being. Mercy for Mankind is his title. On the other hand, his beloved fellow human beings are running away from his beloved Lord and almost killing themselves. Can you imagine the condition of such a heart? The Prophet (may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him) himself describes the situation:

"My example is that of a man who made a fire, and when it lighted what was around it, moths and other insects started falling into it. The man tried (his best) to prevent them, (from falling in the Tire) but they overwhelmed him and rushed into the fire. Now, similarly, I take hold of you by your waists to keep you from falling into the fire, but you strive hard to fall (Bukhari, Muslim).

Now look at yourself. Do you believe in your message so intensely as to find it difficult to breathe when people refuse to accept it? Do you love humanity so well that disappointment, anger and hate do not replace the feelings of love, sympathy and concern? Do you feel the same pangs of grief when you see people going astray, as you would feel seeing some dear one burn in fire? After all, among these dear ones are included your mothers and fathers, brothers and sisters, wives and children, relatives, friends, schoolmates and colleagues. The worldly cares, financial concerns, and hardships of those whom we love depress us and render us well nigh dead. All of us have been through this in some way or another. Does the concern to deliver the message of Allah to the people, the desire to save them from fire and lead them to salvation keep us impatient and agitated? Do we try to hold them back and save them from disaster instead of branding them transgressors when we see people going astray? Believe me, until our lives reflect the image of "thou tormentest thyself, we will not be able to do, even mention, what was successfully performed by the Prophet (may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him).

THE THIRD IMAGE

Mission Accomplished



Here is the third of the pictures for you. The scene is full of beauty and inspiration. It owes its charm to the previous two pictures. This third one could not have taken shape if the first and second had not paved the way.

In the perspective you can see the broad valley of Arafat. There is a multitude of people, about a hundred-and-fifty-thousand. Among them are men, women and children. They have come from all corners of Arabia. They have gathered in response to the call raised by Prophet Ibrahim, the first leader of the religion of their forefathers. His call has been revived by one of his heirs, and the last leader of his line of succession, the Prophet Muhammad (may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him). He took this call to every nook and corner of Arabia, introduced it to the surrounding lands and ensured its perennial communication to future generations.

The Prophet (may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him) is seen on the back of a camel. He is giving his last instructions to his followers. Approaching the end of the speech, he puts them an earnest question;

"O people! What shall you say tomorrow in Allah's presence when you will be asked about me."

The thousands shout back in one voice:

"We stand witness that you have fulfilled your obligations; you have fulfilled your duty of counseling us; you have faithfully delivered your message."

The Prophet (may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him) raises his forefinger, pointing to the sky and sometimes to the crowd and says:

"O Allah, bear witness!"

"O Allah, bear witness!"

"O Allah, bear witness!" *(Abu-Daud; Muslim)*

Who can make Allah and the people witness over the discharge of his duties like this? 'What is this picture but a question for you? You are the carriers of the same message; it is the chief objective of your life, and you devote your days and nights to achieve it.

You complain that people do not listen to you despite years of effort. I ask you one thing. Are you in a position to gather the people of your family and your neighborhood, leaving aside general humanity, non-Muslims around, the people of your country

or your town, and ask them to stand witness in Allah's presence that you have delivered the message, discharged your duty, and fulfilled the obligation of guiding them? And do you hope that they will answer in the affirmative?

You are responsible for delivering Allah's message to the members of your household, your extended family, your neighborhood, your school and college, office or factory and your friends and acquaintances — all you come in contact with and eventually, whoever you can reach, whoever is in want of guidance and in need of the cure. Any one of them can question you why you did not come to rescue him when he was in the dark and you had the light, he was wandering in the wilderness and you had knowledge of the path. If he faces the chastisement in the hereafter, how will you defend your negligence?

The aspects of the Prophet's life that these three sketches bring to notice and which you have to emulate are quite clear:

- *A deep realization of the importance of 'Da'wah' and our responsibilities in this regard.*
- *A ruling passion to deliver Allah's message to the people.*
- *A profound sense of accountability regarding people we meet and know whether they can stand witness that we have fulfilled our obligations towards them: well wishing, giving them sympathetic advice, and delivering them the message from their Lord.*





Mercy for Mankind

In my album pictures are beautifully arranged and kept in order. Let us move to another section to see the fourth picture. It is very dear to me; I look at it time and again and have shown it to my friends for years. While the earlier three pictures depicted how seriously the Prophet (may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him) took his message, this shows how kind and considerate he was towards audiences.

THE FOURTH IMAGE

The Wounded That Rained Flower



This is the tenth year of the da'wah and apostleship. The people and the leaders of Makkah are still not prepared to worship the one and only God. Allah, and follow the Prophet and turn Makkah into a center of the Divine Mission. On the contrary, they are now planning to do away with the Missionary himself. The caring uncle Abu Talib has passed away, leaving him without the traditional tribal protection. The twenty-five-year long companionship with his wife, the Lady Khadija, has ended with her death. Where is he to seek solace and shelter?

Makkah has laid its best-cut gems on his lap, but he is in search of a settlement where a society based upon the worship of One God can flourish. He feels the need for a place where preparations can be made for the establishment of Allah's rule. The Prophet thinks of Ta'if and sets out for it. This is perhaps the only city close to Makkah. It is a fertile land, with abundant water, and fruit-laden orchards. Maybe the leaders and the wealthy there respond well to the call.

The v/ay to Ta'if passes through a difficult terrain, hilly rocks and valleys, It is summer, hot blazing summer of Arabia He is now 50, already past his youthful energetic days. He cannot afford to buy a horse or camel to ride as his resources have been drained by missionary activities. He covers the distance on foot in a pair of sandals accompanied by his adopted son and youthful follower Zaid bin Haritha. On his arrival at Ta'if the Prophet immediately goes to the three leaders of 'Banu Thaqif: Abd Yalail, Masud and Habib. He presents before them the message of Islam. All his hopes are dashed to the ground. He has been rejected by his native Makkahns for the last ten years. He has cherished high hopes of the people of Ta'if. These three leaders too, blinded by their pelf and power, refuse to see the truth and accept Islam. The answers they give are quite interesting.

The first arrow aimed at the broken heart is: 'Could God find none but you to make a prophet, you who do not have even a donkey to ride?' The second one presents his political philosophy: 'If God had sent you, the hangings of the Ka'bah would have been torn down. The third one's logic is: 'Let me never speak to you for if you are a messenger from God, as you say, then you are too great a personage for me to address; and if you lie, it is not fitting that 1 should speak to you. Broken hearted the Prophet leaves that place. The leaders of Ta'if stir up their slaves and town reprobates to insult him and shout at him. They aim pellets at his ankles and knees. When he sits down because of the terrible pain, they force him to get on his feet again. The stones and pellets continue for quite a distance. He is exhausted because of injuries and loss of blood and at long last he takes refuge in an orchard outside the town.

Now look at this picture. Whose heart will it not rend to pieces? ,

"The knees are badly hurt, the shins bruised and bleeding, the blessed robes are crimson. The faithful Zaid lifts up his fainted master from the dusty road and carries him to a place where he finds water. When he tries to take off the shoes, they would not come off because of the sticky blood that has jelled in them" (Manazir Ahsan Gilani: An Nabi-ul-Khatim, p 58).

"What a day it was! How terrible was the scene! He who had come for all the peoples, for all times to come, was being returned and rejected. Not only did they refuse to accept his message, they also injured him till he fell to the ground. And it was he who would save them from falling into the fire, holding them and pulling them back by their waists. {Ibid, p 58)

"Once Aisha said, "O Messenger of Allah, has there been a day harder on you than the day of (the battle of) Uhad?" He replied," The hardship that I suffered at the hands of your people were not less but the hardest day was when I presented my message before Abd Yalail in Ta'if and he rejected it".

(Naeem Siddiqui: Mohsin-e-lnsaniyat, p 196)

Now keep all these scenes of woe before your eyes — hopeful journey to Ta'if, broken heart and bruised body, the hardest day of life - and mark the words that he utters while he prays to his Lord:

"O Allah unto thee do I complain of my weakness, of my helplessness, of my want of resources, and of my lowliness before men. O Most Merciful of the merciful, Thou art Lord of the weak. And Thou art my Lord. Into whose hands wilt Thou entrust me? Unto some far off stranger who will ill-treat me? Or unto a foe whom Thou hast empowered against me? I care not, so Thou be not wrath with me. But Thy favoring help - that were for me the broader way and the wider scope! I take refuge in the Light of Thy Countenance whereby all darkness's are illuminated and the things of this world and the next are rightly ordered, lest Thou make descend Thine anger upon me, or lest Thy wrath beset me. Yet is it Thine to reproach until Thou art well pleased? There is no power and no might except through Thee."

You saw the condition of the heart, the dedication to the Da'wah, hardships of the journey, trust in the Lord and the desire to win His pleasure. These colors are quite clear in the picture but there are certain other colours which I would like to point out to you. Listening to the Prophet's prayer quoted above, Zaid offers this suggestion: "O Messenger of Allah, pray for their destruction" But he who is mercy from head to foot, says: "Why should I curse them? If they do not believe in Allah, I hope their next generations will worship the One and Only God.'

A writer has written in these words: "This was a reflection of the merciful aspect of the Prophet's personality. It was an amazing example of his immense and immortal love and affection for humanity and his patience and perseverance. History fails to present even a semblance of this profundity of love for humanity, faith in the truth of his message and dedication in faithfully delivering this message to the world. No other great

Personality could rise to these heights of kindness towards humanity"(Abul Kalam Azad; Rasool-e-Rahmat, p 152).

The prophet now leaves the garden and sets out for Makkah. When he reaches the place where pilgrims put on their special robes (Ihram), the angel Gabriel comes and says, 'Allah has seen the response shown you by the people (of Ta'if) O Muhammad (may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him). Here is the angel in charge of the mountains. He has been sent by your Lord and is at your command". The angel of mountains approaches the Prophet and begs his permission in these words: "Oh Muhammad

(may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him) I am at your disposal. I can move these mountains to crush and destroy the city they surround". What follows is worth observing.

"Was there any thing out of his control whose ankles and knees had been battered? Was the given authority ever withdrawn? He who was battered with stones and pebbles was now empowered to answer easily with rocks and hills. To what use did he put his power, he who could command the angel of mountains? Would he make life difficult for them who made his life miserable? He could do it if he wanted, and he had every right to destroy those who had tortured him." (Gilani: An Nabi-ul-Khatim}

History that has recorded the flood that drowned Noah's people, the storm that overcame the Aad, the roar and thunder that shook the people of Thamud, the rain of stones that covered the people of 'Lot' and the Nile which drowned the armies of Pharaoh, has also recorded the answer that Muhammad (PBUH) gave to the angel of mountains. The prophet says, "1 am not disappointed. I do hope that from their loins Allah will bring forth a people who will worship the One and Only God and will not ascribe partners to Him"

How beautiful, captivating and moving is this picture of Ta'if! How can one help not loving it? It is tike a fountain of love. What a wealth of compassion! How kind is the Prophet to the creatures of His Lord! How firm is the rock of hope on which is based the edifice of Da'wah ! Everybody loves one's friends. How many people are there who love their enemies? A good word draws a good word; but how many are there who give blessings in response to stones and abuses. There are no feelings of revenge, no hate, no anger, no foul words, no self-conceit, nor any misuse of power. Instead, what we find is the tenderness of heart, sympathy, kindness, mercy and a message of life. Force is used only when indispensable, to the needed extent only - and that also to curb mischief. The biggest concern is that hearts should be conquered so that they bow before their Lord; the greatest wish is that there should be people who respond positively to the invitation of truth and join in sooner or later.

I think of this picture again and again. We often forget it completely when we are in the middle of conflicts, arguments and scuffles. We forget that we are against the disease and not the patient; we hate sin and evil, not the evildoer. A bad person is like a bad part of the body and is amputated only when there is no hope of recovery left. Compare yourself with this picture. Do you have the kind of love, kindness, mercy, tenderness of heart, magnanimity, perseverance and strength of character that you could respond to abuses and stones with blessings and good wishes? Is it possible that people throw stones at you and you strew flowers in their way? Is it possible that you are rejected and you do not give up hope, you are torn apart and still you keep contact, you are oppressed and you forgive, you are deprived and you keep giving? It is not easy to answer evil with good. But without doing so you cannot go very far in the field of Da'wah, good deeds and your steadfastness in Islam- Only the fortunate few are endowed with this wealth and the fortunate is he who has been granted patience. The Lord says:

وَمَنْ أَحْسَنُ قَوْلاً مِّمَّن دَعَا إِلَى اللَّهِ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحاً وَقَالَ إِنَّنِي مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ (33)
وَلَا تَسْتَوِي الْحَسَنَةُ وَلَا السَّيِّئَةُ ادْفَعْ بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ فَإِذَا الَّذِي بَيْنَكَ وَبَيْنَهُ عَدَاوَةٌ
كَأَنَّهُ وَلِيٌّ حَمِيمٌ (34) وَمَا يُلَقَّاهَا إِلَّا الَّذِينَ صَبَرُوا وَمَا يُلَقَّاهَا إِلَّا ذُو حَظٍّ عَظِيمٍ

(حم السجده ۳۳:۳۵)

"And who is better in speech than him who prayed unto his Lord and doeth right, and saith; Lo! I am of those who surrender (unto Him). The good deed and the evil deed are not alike. Repel the evil deed with one which is better, then lo! he, between whom and thee there was enmity (will become) as though he was a bosom friend. But none is granted it save those who are steadfast, and none is granted it save the owner of great happiness"

(Fushshilat 41:33-35).

To tell you the truth, you will never be able to conquer hearts until you have the same spirit and perseverance, magnanimity, love and kindness. The Caller is personally a rival or enemy to none. He fights for the well-being of others. He kills with the same intention with which a surgeon amputates a good-for-nothing limb.

Expectations Few, Hopes High

Now let me show you three of the pictures from another part of my album. These will help you see where all the missionary work takes us to in this world and the other.

THE FIFTH IMAGE

Life Conditional on Worship



On the way from Makkah to Madinah there is a small town known as Badr. Here the road turns off the shores of the Red Sea and winds toward Madinah. At a short distance small hills surround a valley and sandy fields. This is the second year after the immigration (Hijrah] and an incident is going to take place in this valley which will change the course of humanity from an alley of death to the highway of life. On one side are gathered all the big and powerful leaders from that great center of ignorance, Makkah. On the other is a force comprising those who have responded to the call unto the One and Only God. They have Joined the Prophet over a period of fifteen years. They include the best of Makkah and those who have responded to his call from Madinah. To support the cause of falsehood, there is an army of one thousand men with no shortage of horses and swords. On the side of truth there is a sortie of three hundred and thirteen with only two horses and a very limited number of swords.

Sa'ad bin Mu'ad (may Allah be pleased with him) has erected a booth on one of the hillocks. The Prophet of Allah is sitting under its shade with his friend of the cave, Abu Bakr Siddique. At night the devotees of Muhammad enjoy a sound and refreshing sleep, a mark of the Divine favor, for, it was Allah Who covered them with a slumber to give their minds and bodies extra rest. Nevertheless, the Prophet spends the whole of night in prayer and supplication. He stands before the Lord Who has sent him with duties of apostleship. At times he puts his forehead on the ground.

It was a strange scene. The fate of 'tauheed' (the concept of the Oneness of God) depended upon only a few lives in so large a world. The Prophet was over-whelmed with a feeling of lowliness. He stretched forth his hands and said, 'O God, fulfill the promise Thou did'st make me.' Such was the self-abandonment that his mantle dropped off his shoulders and he did not even notice. He put his forehead on the ground and said "O Allah, should this group of Muslims be defeated today, Thou shalt not be worshipped ever after". (Shibli Naumani: Seeratun Nabi, p 321]

These loving manners are quite moving but note the condition on which the life of this Ummah is being asked: 'Should this small group be defeated today, Thou shalt not be worshipped ever after'.

That is to say if this group is granted life today, every breath of their own life and the lives of their next generations will be devoted to calling humanity to its Lord. This prayer is an expression of a request, want, promise; it is a mission statement too. He did not say that with the extinguishing of the Ummah civilization would perish, factories would vanish, science and technology would die, and wealth and production would come to an end. No, all these things would remain intact but the relationship with the Lord of the Universe would be terminated. That means these things would be deprived of their spirit. As a result all these phenomena of culture and development would take humanity towards death and destruction and not life and well-being. The battle of Badr was won which meant that the covenant had been ratifid — the deal struck.

That is why the day of Badr is also known as the day of criteria. This picture should inspire you to put to yourself the one and only question: Do we follow the way which would enable us to submit our petition before the Lord in the same manner? A petition for life and success? Is it likely that we stand deserving of the tidings of life and success so that a promise of the vicegerency of the earth, supremacy of the 'Deen', security from fear, and salvation in the hereafter is fulfilled? This promise is for those who are equipped with faith and righteous deeds, whose disposition is stated in Surah An Moor: 55. "They worship only Me and will not associate anybody with Me".

THE SIXTH IMAGE

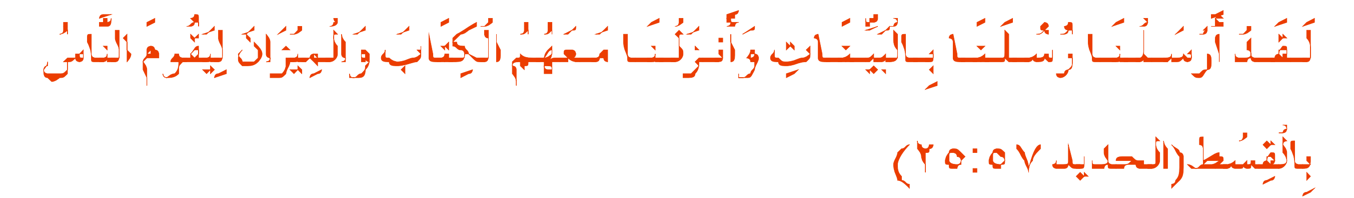
Milestones



Now look at the second picture from this section. This is the early period of the Da'wah. So far only a few people have pledged their submission to the Prophet. Mountains of hardships have fallen on them. Some of them are laid down on burning sand under the weight of a heavy stone; some others are tied with ropes and chains and dragged about in the streets. There are still others who are laid on red embers. One of these oppressed people is Khubab bin al Aart (may Allah be pleased with him). He was forcibly laid on red embers to the point that the fat from his back melted and extinguished them. He presents himself before the Prophet (May Allah's Blessings be on him). He draws the picture further in the following words:

"The Messenger of Allah (may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him) was sitting under the shade of the Ka'bah, leaning against one of its walls. His mantle supported his head. I complained to him of my miserable condition and the atrocities I had suffered and said: "Will you not, O" Prophet, ask for our help? Will you not pray to Allah for us? Hearing these words, he sat up, his face flushed, and he said: "The people who were before you and who were entrusted with this work were caught and buried alive in pits dug for them. Some times a saw was brought and their heads were split into two. Their flesh was stripped off their bones with iron combs. Even then, they remained steadfast and did not renounce their faith. By God, Allah will fulfill this mission. A time will come when a man will travel from San'a to Hadrumot without any fear, and he will not be scared of anybody but Allah, and he will not apprehend any danger except that some wolf may harm his animals. But you people get impatient" (Bukhari, Muslim).

You can see the milestones of your missionary struggle with open eyes. First, the worship of the One and Only God; secondly, the establishment of a society where no one is wronged, where the strong will be weak if they usurp rights of others or oppress them, and the weak will be strong if their rights are taken unjustly or they are oppressed. If only a goat dies of hunger in a far-flung area, it would make the ruler tremble out of a deep sense of accountability. Give it a little thought. Does your message witness and point out the same stages? Because it is the crux and gist of the mission of the prophets. Every prophet gave the same advice to his people: Worship the One and Only God! It was also revealed:



We sent aforetime our apostles with Clear Signs and sent down with them the Book and the Balance (of Right and Wrong) that men may stand forth in justice…….. (Al-Hadid 57:25).

The establishment of a just order through jihad and political power has been considered as helping Allah and his apostle.

وَأَنزَلْنَا الْحَدِيدَ فِيهِ بَأْسٌ شَدِيدٌ وَمَنَافِعُ لِلنَّاسِ وَلِيَعْلَمَ اللَّهُ مَن يَنصُرُهُ وَرُسُلَهُ بِالْغَيْبِ(الحديد ٢٥:٥٧)

And We sent down Iron in which is (material for) mighty war as well as are many benefits for mankind that Allah may test who it is that will help the unseen Him and His apostles (Al-Hadid 57:25).

THE SEVENTH IMAGE

Lovers Came and Went with Promises of the Morrow



The final objective of this da'wah work is beyond and higher than the establishment of a just order. People may or may not submit to the Will of God, a society based on principles of fairness and justice may or may not be established, our true goal and objective is guaranteed. There is no question of our losing it. Our real accomplishment, our final destination is the attainment of paradise and salvation from hell-fire.

But the fact remains that salvation has been guaranteed to only those who call people to worship God and establish a just order and devote whatever they have in this struggle. They put their own lives at stake. Yet the final destination and real achievement is "Jamah" only.

فَاسْتَجَابَ لَهُمْ رَبُّهُمْ أَنِّي لَا أُضِيعُ عَمَلَ عَامِلٍ مِّنكُم مِّن ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أُنثَىٰ بَعْضُكُم مِّن
بَعْضٍ فَالَّذِينَ هَاجَرُوا وَأُخْرِجُوا مِن دِيَارِهِمْ وَأُوذُوا فِي سَبِيلِي وَقَاتَلُوا وَقُتِلُوا
لَأُكَفِّرَنَّ عَنْهُمْ سَيِّئَاتِهِمْ وَلَأُدْخِلَنَّهُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِن تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ (آل عمران ٣:١٩٥)

So their Lord accepted of them (their supplication and answered them), Never will I suffer to be lost the work of any of you be he male or female: ye are members one of another; those who have left their homes or been driven out therefrom or suffered harm in My cause, or fought or been slain, verily I will blot out from them their iniquities, and admit them into gardens with rivers flowing beneath (Al-i-'lmran 3:195).

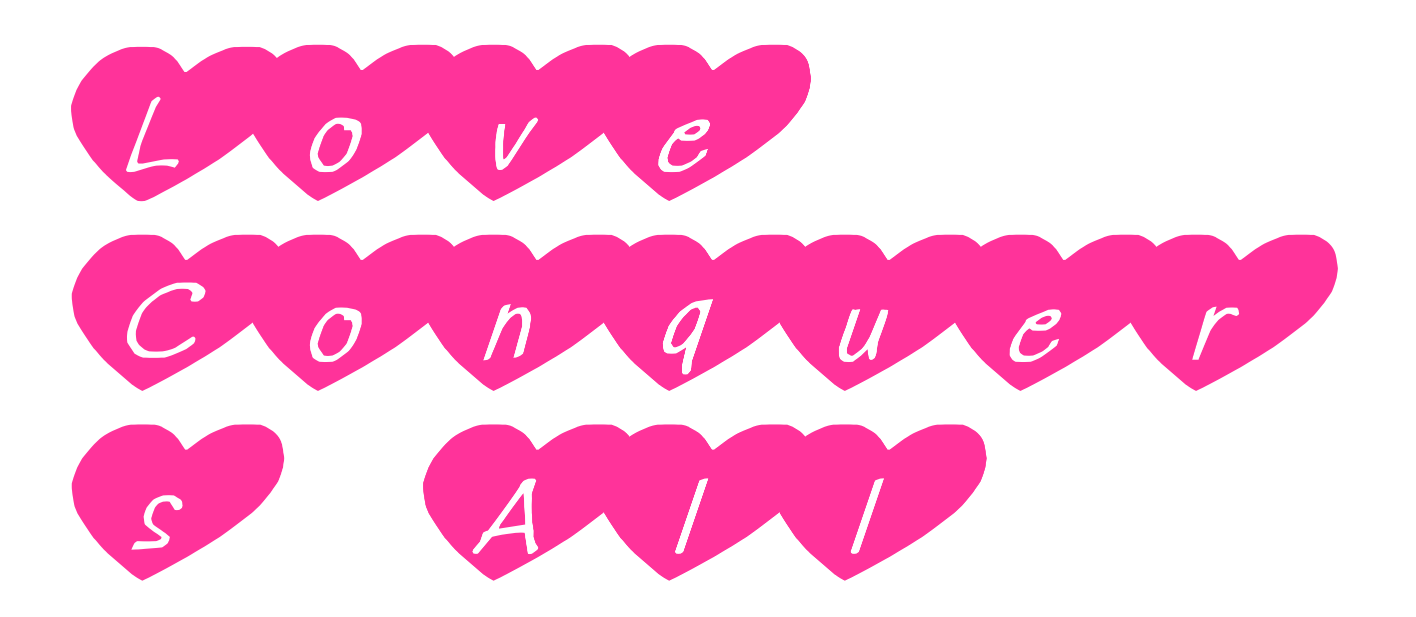
There are so many images in my album which depict how (he unseen 'jannah' becomes a reality. How a whole life is given for its attainment, how every thing is abandoned, how one leaps towards it, how one smells its fragrance, how one stretches one's hand towards its fruits. Shortness of time does not allow me to show you all these pictures now, but I will put them aside for another occasion, yet I would like you quickly to glance at a few of them.

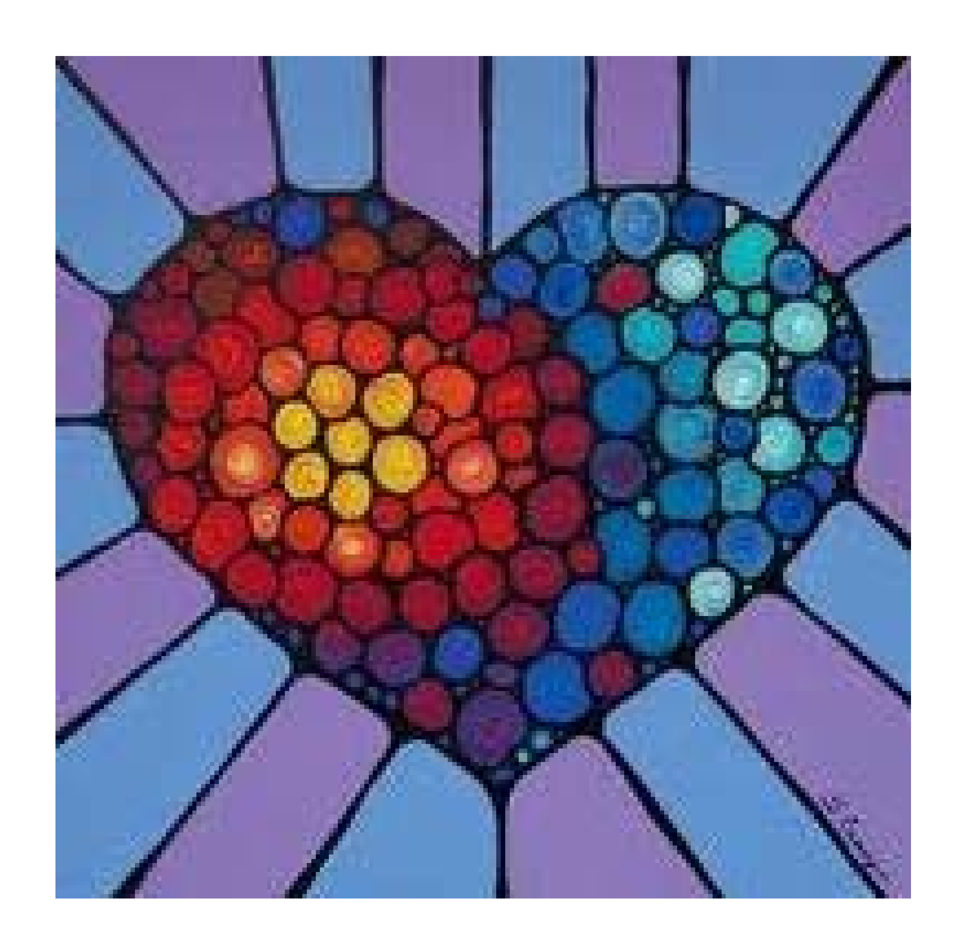
Here is Anas bin Nadhar. He hears the rumor of the Prophet's 'shahadah' during the battle of Uhad. He is not depressed but is attracted by the fragrance of Jannah coming from the hills of Uhad and despite all the wounds and bruises over his body, he hastens there.

This is Umar bin Hamam. When he hears the call to make haste towards 'jannah'. he cannot wait to finish the dates in his hand. He throws them away and leaps to 'paradise'.

And now, there is Haram bin Malhan. The enemy pierces a javelin in his back. He falls down on the ground but before death his face lights up with joy as if success were dancing before his eyes. These words are on his lips: "By the God of the 'Ka'bah', I have succeeded."

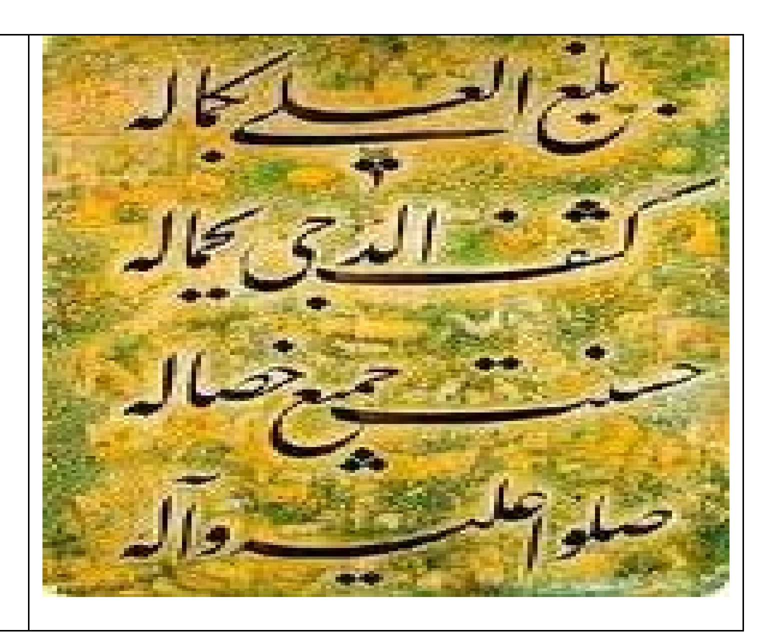
Here is Abu Dahda. The gardens of 'jannah' are so sure, so near and so precious in his eyes that he gives away his own valuable orchard to the Prophet as a bargain for them. He is beside himself with joy after having given away his own date-laden orchard.


Love Conquers All



THE EIGHTH IMAGE

Compassionate and Merciful



This is one of the pictures of the Prophet (may Allah's peace be on him) that the Supreme Artist and the Shaper himself has very kindly given us:

فَبِمَا رَحْمَةٍ مِّنَ اللّهِ لِنتَ لَهُمْ وَلَوْ كُنتَ فَظّاً غَلِيظَ الْقَلْبِ لاَنفَضُّواْ مِنْ حَوْلِكَ
فَاعْفُ عَنْهُمْ وَاسْتَغْفِرْ لَهُمْ وَشَاوِرْهُمْ فِي الأَمْرِ (آل عمران ٣:١٥٩)

It is part of the Mercy of Allah that thou dost deal gently with them. Wert thou severe or harsh-hearted they would have broken away from about thee; so pass over (their faults) and ask for (Allah's) forgiveness for them; and consult them in affairs (of the movement) (Al-i-'imran 3:159).

لَقَدْ جَاءكُمْ رَسُولٌ مِّنْ أَنفُسِكُمْ عَزِيزٌ عَلَيْهِ مَا عَنِتُّمْ حَرِيصٌ عَلَيْكُم بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ
رَؤُوفٌ رَّحِيمٌ (التوبة ٩:١٢٨)

Now hath come unto you an apostle from amongst yourselves: it grieves him that ye should perish: ardently anxious is he over you: to the believers is he most kind and merciful (At-Tauba 9:128).

Mark that the binding force that keeps a group together is not only the truth of the mission. It is also the kindly and patient temperament of the caller. No doubt, this is a gift from God, but it is so vita! in importance that without it people would never gather; rather they would scatter. How can one imagine the vastness and depth of kindness and love that the Almighty Allah expresses by using the two words which are among His own attributes: Rauf and Raheem. It was the result of the same mercy, love and kindness that a force was mustered which carried the message of Islam from the shores of the Atlantic to the banks of the river Indus and from Europe to China in a period of one century only.

THE NINTH IMAGE

Overlooking Faults



The second picture of this section is also very beautiful and attractive. The prophet was making preparations for the conquest of Makkah because the Quraish had violated the truce of Hudaibiya. On the other side the Quraish were confused and uncertain whether the Prophet would continue with the treaty or not. This was the best time to conquer Makkah, without spilling any blood, in the name of the Lord, where was situated His House, the Holy Ka'ba. That is why all preparations were taking place in secret and in silence. Hatib was one of the companions who had taken part in the battle of Badr. He thought that the influential people of Madinah would rescue their Makkahn relatives and he, as a man of no influence, should inform his relatives before hand so that they could escape. As the Prophet's success was certain this piece of information could do no harm, he thought. So he gave a letter to a woman and sent her to Makkah.

On the one hand he failed to appreciate that the compassionate and mercy for the worlds was going to announce a general amnesty for the people of Makkah. 'You will not be held up for anything today.' On the other hand, he could not apprehend that Atiah Ta'ala could let the Prophet know of his letter.

The secret of the letter was revealed to the Prophet. He sent a party for the woman. They caught her and recovered the letter. The case was brought to the Prophet's court. Hatib confessed his lapse. The discussion started what the Judgment should be. It was a case of treason considered from any angle. Umar suggested beheading, but the person who had to pass the Judgment was compassionate and merciful. He forgave Hatib his most serious offence.

These pictures show that organizations are neither formed nor strengthened by strict rules and measures. Only sometimes are strict measures required to save an organization from anarchy, uproot mischief, implement reform, anticipate damage, and fill the lacunae. But the only thing that turns organizations and groups into invincible powers is a policy of overlooking faults, forgiving lapses and extending kindness and love, for, the lesson of history is that it is only love that conquers all.

In the light of this example you can observe your own day-to-day dealings with one another, the attitude of your leaders toward you and one another and judge how near or far from the 'uswa-tun-hasana' you all are.

I have a lot more pictures of forgiveness and kindness that I cannot show you in this sitting, but you may have a look at two of them. They show how kindness and courtesy help in the implementation of orders and the teaching and training of morals.

THE TENTH IMAGE

Kind Teacher



The Prophet (may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him) was sitting in his mosque, a few companions around him, when there came in a villager, a Bedouin. While standing, he started urinating on the pebbled floor of the mosque. Some of the Companions rushed towards him. They might have been harsh with him. The Prophet intercepted and told them to "leave him alone' so that he could relieve himself. When the villager finished, the Prophet called him near and with great kindness explained to him that a mosque was a sacred place and it was prohibited to urinate there. That was the place to pray to Allah, worship Him and read the Qur'an. Then he turned to his companions and asked them to clean the floor with water and emphasized that they were required to be kind and compassionate, not harsh. One of them brought a bucket of water and washed the place clean (Bukhari, Muslim).

When people commit mistakes all around us, do we show the same patience and kindness as required of the reformers we claim to be? Do we reflect kindness and tolerance or harshness and intolerance?

THE ELEVENTH IMAGE

Solace of the Heart



Once someone presented himself before the Prophet (may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him) and expressed his woe that he had destroyed himself.

The Prophet (may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him) enquired what had happened.

He said: "I slept with my wife during (the day in) the month of Ramadan".

The Prophet said. "Free one slave (as expiation)".

He replied: "I am so poor that I cannot afford to do that".

The Prophet said: "Fast for two months."

He said: "I am not capable of doing that either."

The Prophet said, "Feed sixty of the poor."

He said: "1 do not have the means."

It so happened that some one brought in a basket of dates.

The Prophet said to the man," Take them and give them to the poor"

The man said," By the God who made you a messenger, there is none poorer than I in Madinah"

The Prophet could not help laughing and said:

"Then, you manage them yourself {Bukhara Shibli Naumani: Seerah tun Nabi, Vol. II P 216).

Lifestyle

Now I open another part of my album for an image that depicts what what you would call the Prophet's lifestyle. This will be the last image of the day.

THE TWELFTH IMAGE

Life Austere not Opulent



This picture has been drawn by Umar bin Khattab. He narrates: "Once when I presented myself before the Prophet (may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him), he was sitting in an upper chamber. I glanced around the room and could see these things only. There was only one piece of cloth on his body; a bedstead without bedding, only one pillow. On one side were lying a handful of barley. In a corner near his sandals was an animal-skin. A few skins, which served as water bags, were hanging on a peg'. 'Seeing this'. Umar says, Tears started running down my cheeks.'

"The Prophet asked the reason why I was weeping. I said, 'O Prophet of Allah, why should I not weep'? The bedstead strings leave their marks on your body. This small room is what contains all your belongings and I can see what it has. Caesar and Cyrus indulge in all the pleasures of the world and you, the Messenger of Allah and Most revered one, live in sheer austerity.'

The Prophet said, "O Son of Khattab, would you not prefer that they should get this world and we the hereafter?" (Bukhari).

He who had access to everything in the world did not amass anything. He gave away whatever was brought to him. He could have lived like Caesar and Cyrus and enjoyed the luxuries had he but desired. But he was more comfortable in the lifestyle of a 'fakir' (hermit).

The Traditions tell us that the Prophet was fond of perfumes and sometimes wore fine clothes and also ate the roasted shoulder of goat-mutton with relish.

Abdullah ibne Abbas says that he saw the Prophet in the best of clothes. (Abu Da'ud.) Once Abdullah bin Umar bought a Syrian gown. When he got home he noticed that there were red stripes on it.. He went back and returned the gown. Somebody narrated the incident to Asma, daughter of Abu Bakr. She asked someone to bring her a gown which belonged to the Prophet and showed it to the people. On the pocket and sleeves and the skirt there were stripes of colorful silk (Abu Daud).

Every follower of Prophet Muhammad is not required to live a life of austerity. How could the Prophet forbid the attractions the Lord of the Worlds has allowed?

The spirit of this picture is that to choose the way of the Truth is to choose the rewards of the hereafter. Those few who have chosen the hereafter, whose life-mission is to bring the world to the worship of the Almighty Allah must clean their hearts of any desire for the luxuries and the glory of this world as an objective. Anything, which is gained at the cost of the hereafter, is no gain at all; it is sheer loss. The worries and concerns that fill the hearts of the worldly should not allure them.

That is why it has been advised that your eyes should not waver. They should not look for an ideal in the life-styles of those whose riches and prosperity is confined to this world alone. They have grand houses decorated with marble; they have beautiful gardens, their floors are covered with precious rugs, their rooms are furnished in style, air-conditioned and cluttered with modern gadgets. They have long pockets and big bank balances. None of these things is prohibited to you but none of them should ever be your aim and objective. It is better not to have them if you can only have them at the expense of the da'wah work, your mission, and your duty. They are prohibited at such a terrible price.

وَلَا تَمُدَّنَّ عَيْنَيْكَ إِلَى مَا مَتَّعْنَا بِهِ أَزْوَاجاً مِّنْهُمْ زَهْرَةَ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا لِنَفْتِنَهُمْ فِيهِ وَرِزْقُ رَبِّكَ خَيْرٌ وَأَبْقَى (طه ٢٠:١٣١)

And do not extend your eyes toward that by which We have given enjoyment to [some] categories of them, (its being but] the splendor of worldly life by which We test them. And the provision of your Lord is better and more lasting (Ta-Ha 2O:131).

D e c o r a t e

t h e

H e a r t

B e

c o l o r e d

I n h i s

c o l o r



Image HIS pattern



I have shown you twelve pictures from five different parts of my album. They are now with you. It is my desire that you decorate them in the frame of your heart and keep them there forever. I wish your ears could remain attentive to their message, your eyes fixed on them, your heart fond of them. Keeping them before youself as a criterion, have a look at your own life, your character, values, morals and deeds. That is why it has been said: 'Ye have indeed in the Apostle of God a beautiful pattern of conduct.' (Al Ahzab 33:21). All the beauty and elegance has been exhibited through the life of Muhammad (may Allah's peace and blessings be on him). Whoever is in search of beauty, he should begin by taking up the begging bowl of longing and love and follow the pattern (uswa).

This hymn to beauty is not being sung with a view to be heard and applauded, or that it should be recited and reproduced, or that it should move its audiences to tears. No, it is not being sung to that end. It must have a lasting imprint on our lives and deeds. We should imbibe the beauty and spirit of these images and mould ourselves according to them and should take on their hue and color. Our life should reflect the same objectives, the same passion, and the same manners that are reflected in these images.

Now you might ask about the method by which we can develop in ourselves a yearning desire, a rock-hard determination, unflinching courage and immense capability needed to follow and emulate the grand model. Can our life in some degree reflect the same beauty?

The answer to your question has already been given in the same verse of the Qur'an in the first part of which this 'uswa' has been praised. When you read the complete verse you learn about the provisions needed to complete this journey successfully. It has been stated that in the example of the Prophet is the best guidance for any one whose hope lies in God and the Final Day and who remembers his Lord Allah constantly. Hope in Allah and the Final Day and frequently remembering Allah are the two things that can make your journey light.

The words "believe in Allah and the Day of Judgment" do not occur in this verse; rather, the word 'yarjoo' has been used. That means the faith that is needed is not a verbal declaration rather a faith that can help us concentrate all our hopes, wishes, desires and efforts on Allah and the Day of Judgment

You may read and listen to the biography of the Prophet again and again, you cannot inculcate in yourself the needed initiative and grit unless you take to remembering Allah often and fix your gaze at your Lord and the Final Day.

There are many ways to remember Allah: to testify your faith in Him. to glorify Him. to sing His praises, to express your gratitude, to declare His Greatness, to accept His Unity, to stand long before Him, to expend in His way, to bear hunger and thirst for Him, to go round His house again and again. One very important way of remembering Allah is to call people to His worship, to deliver his message to them, to propagate His Deen, to strive hard and offer sacrifices in His way.

Prophet Moses was sent to the Pharaoh's court. He was given the duty to stand before that Godless tyrant and invite him to the worship of Allah and to liberate the people of Israel from his bondage. Moses expressed his weakness, tack of resources, the stammer in his tongue and his other shortcomings, and implored that his heart be opened, his work be made easy for him, his tongue fluent, so that people should understand him. He asked for this 'so that we glorify Thee often and remember Thee again and again.' The remembrance that he sought was not to sit in a corner and glorify Allah (on beads); rather he was going to appear in the court of a tyrant king and calling him to his Lord Allah. For these two things Moses uses the words 'tasbih' and 'zikr'. In the same way Allah on High addresses him: "Beware, lest you should be negligent toward My remembrance." Here also the word 'zikr' has clearly been used in the meaning of 'calling people to the Lord". At another place Allah Ta'ala attaches 'zikr' with the best of His tidings and says, "Remember Me, and I will remember you." This verse has been beautifully embedded between two verses in the Qur'an. The first verse is where the order for changing the 'direction' (kibia) has been given. It was a sign that a new 'Urnmah' was being raised in the world to carry the banner of Islam.

There it is said: "We have sent among you, of yourselves, a Messenger, to recite Our signs to you and to purify you and to teach you the Book and the Wisdom and to teach you what you knew not." Then comes the second verse. It reads: "Seek you help in patience and prayer; surely God is with the patient. And say not of those slain in God's way, They are dead'; rather they are living but you are not aware" After this it is said: "Surely We will try you with something of fear and hunger, and diminution of goods and lives and fruits; yet give thou good tidings unto the patient." Between these two statements this verse has been placed: "So remember Me, and I will remember you; and be thankful to Me; and be not ungrateful to Me." Because I have opened to you the path of guidance; I have blessed you with an opportunity to tread this path. This is my favor to you. You should not ignore it lest you be ungrateful. And remember me and prepare yourself for the hardships of My way and bear them with patience.

Let us consider this from another angle. The first revelation in the cave, Hira, brings the message 'Read!' The second revelation brings the order 'Stand up and warn". So before any commands about prayers, fasting, zakat, and hajj or any other commands in Islam, the first order is 'Read!' so that you become acquainted with Allah's message and the second command is to 'Stand up' and 'call people to the way of their Lord and warn them. This means that the duty of "da'wah" is such as should never be avoided. The most prominent thing in the 'uswa' of the Prophet is that he stood up and started warning his people and calling them to Allah and striving to establish the Greatness of Allah.

These images from the Prophet's life call upon you to invite the people of your township, your neighborhood, your college, school and university, your factories, your household and your extended family, to Allah and deliver them the message from your Lord. You have been given this responsibility. One of them can stand up on the "Final Day and file a case against you bewailing that this is the man who knew Allah's message, was claimant of spreading it and establishing its supremacy. The Truth was quite evident on him, yet he did not invite us to it.

Learn to feel intensely of the responsibility of da'wah and accountability before Allah. Devote all your time and energy towards this goal. Work with love and dedication. Love your God and love his message. Be kind and considerate to your companions, and everyone around you. If you behave that way, there is no reason that the message you hold dear should remain confined or fail

to reach every nook and corner of the world. May Allah have mercy on us and fill our hearts with a longing to follow the footsteps of His beloved Prophet Muhammad (may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him). Amen.



O Allah! *Have mercy on Muhammad and the on the family of Muhammad just like You had mercy on Ibrahim and on the family of Ibrahim.*

O, Allah! *Bless Muhammad just like you blessed Ibrahim and the family of Ibrahim.*

You are worthy of all praise, Majestic and Glorious.

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